

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 1, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy:

As work continues on developing short-term aid packages for COVID-19 relief, our country will also face critical choices on the investments needed to bring tens of millions of people on unemployment back into the workforce. While we must address the immediate pandemic, our country cannot afford inaction on the overlapping jobs and climate crises, both of which continue to exacerbate the ongoing public health crisis.

We must choose to make a transformational investment that not only delivers an economic recovery and puts people back to work, but also serves as a down payment on building a smart, more sustainable future for workers and families, and our planet. For example, a new [economic analysis](#) shows that a bold stimulus plan would create family-sustaining jobs for over 9 million people *every year* for the next 10 years while delivering cleaner air and water, improving public health, counteracting inequity, upgrading our infrastructure, and dramatically cutting U.S. climate pollution.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, certain jobs in clean energy sectors were among the fastest growing in the country. By one estimate, advanced energy jobs grew at twice the rate as U.S. employment overall in 2018. Much of this growth took place on Main Street -- small businesses with less than 20 employees make up 79% of energy efficiency employers. Federal investments that support clean energy, energy efficiency, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, advanced manufacturing, and environmental restoration and remediation will ensure that our nation's economic recovery jump-starts job creation in sectors primed to put Americans to work quickly while building a healthier, more equitable, and more resilient economy for us all.

While we have an incredible opportunity now to support the growth of pollution-free clean energy, we must confront the risk of an economic recovery that restores or even further entrenches our reliance on fossil fuels. We have already seen the Trump administration use this

pandemic to try and prop up the fossil fuel industry through waiving environmental enforcement, amending the Main Street Lending Program in ways that directly benefit oil and gas companies, and selling oil and gas leases at record low prices. There is also a risk that a traditional infrastructure bill could be filled with funding for projects that expand and subsidize high-emission transportation and energy infrastructure, failing to prepare our communities for the emerging risks and uncertainty posed by climate change. This response would not only hasten the climate crisis, but would worsen the air and water pollution that is exacerbating the impacts of COVID-19, particularly for communities of color that have borne the brunt of environmental racism. We would once again be delaying the necessary transition off fossil fuels that must accelerate once the pandemic recedes.

We can avoid these problems by crafting a bold recovery plan that accelerates the creation of a clean energy economy that is less prone to crisis. Several climate and environmental policy experts shared a plan in March with members of Congress for a \$2 trillion [Green Stimulus](#) that would create millions of shovel ready jobs. There are also several recent proposals by organized labor, environmental organizations, business coalitions, climate policy experts, and environmental justice groups that Congress can look towards in creating such a stimulus.

Leaders in Congress have been hard at work developing climate action plans and strategies to reduce climate pollution and move our country to 100% clean energy. We should expand and accelerate these plans and propose a stimulus of the scope necessary to create tens of millions of jobs, counteract inequity, and eliminate pollution, followed by sustained federal investment until the economy is decarbonized and unemployment returns to pre-COVID levels. There is no shortage of ideas available amongst lawmakers, impacted communities, and experts in the field.

Here are some essential principles we recommend for an economic recovery package:

1. **Create Good Jobs for the Clean Energy Economy:** Create millions of new family-sustaining, career-track jobs in clean energy deployment, building retrofits and sustainable homebuilding, local food economies, public transit maintenance and expansion, clean water infrastructure, grid modernization, green infrastructure construction and management, electric vehicle infrastructure, urban gardening, environmental restoration, waste management, and domestic manufacturing and supply chain development of zero- and low-emissions products, including zero-emissions vehicles, energy efficient appliances and building materials, and sustainable textiles and apparel. These investments must link with existing pre-approved apprenticeship and public education programs to bring more low-income and workers of color into good union jobs. For those in carbon-intensive and fossil fuel jobs, provide funds to protect worker benefits, pensions, and wages and provide support for deindustrialized communities.

2. **Invest in Frontline Communities and Environmental Justice:** Deliver targeted and strategic investments to lift up and collaborate with frontline communities, particularly communities of color, Indigenous communities, low-income communities, rural and farming communities, including farmworkers, communities that have suffered disinvestment, and communities that have historically borne the brunt of toxic pollution and climate harm. These investments should include: remediation and cleanup of contaminated areas, public health and education infrastructure investments, housing retrofits, modernizing or expanding water and wastewater systems (including water and wastewater systems for Indian Country by fully funding water rights settlements), rooftop and community solar installation for community ownership, electric bus deployment, rural broadband development, flood control, and other forms of economic diversification and capital investment.
3. **Build an Economy for All:** Expand public and employee ownership by investing in existing public agencies and assets (including public transit agencies, local housing authorities, public school districts, and electric co-ops), taking financial stakes in companies that receive substantial direct investment, and conditioning strategic aspects of the stimulus package on reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and pro-worker measures including commitments to high road labor standards, Davis Bacon prevailing wage rules, project labor agreements, community benefit agreements, Buy Clean and Buy America standards, equitable hiring practices, contracting preferences for businesses led by women and people of color, social enterprises, and worker cooperatives.
4. **Enact a Climate Test:** Ensure that all stimulus investments are consistent with keeping global warming as close as possible to 1.5 degrees Celsius, as the climate science tells us is required to limit further climate breakdown.
5. **Protect our Environment:** Invest in food systems, public lands, and public space by rapidly clearing the backlog of U.S. National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, and other land management agency projects related to building and facility maintenance, restoration of habitats, expansion of our forests, coastal resiliency, and protection of our environment, including state and local park upgrades that can easily be made shovel ready. This should also include direct support for small family farmers to recover and rapidly implement regenerative agriculture practices to ensure their prosperity and a self-reliant food chain. Investments should also prioritize environmental remediation activities that reduce health risks from pollution, help shield communities from climate disasters, and create jobs and economic redevelopment opportunities. This should include water infrastructure upgrades, full lead

service line replacements, brownfield and Superfund site cleanups, and restoration of our wetlands.

Legislation consistent with these principles can provide the necessary support to transition newly unemployed workers into job-intensive industries that are necessary for rising to the challenges of the climate crisis, pollution and public health, and socioeconomic inequity. An upcoming economic recovery bill – tasked with putting millions of Americans back to work – presents the once-in-a-generation opportunity to do it.

We have to get this right. There are no do-overs. We know the importance of listening to our impacted communities, workers, and scientists. We must understand the consequences of acting too late. This cannot be a lost decade for our economy or our planet.

Congress must lead.

Sincerely,



Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress



Brenda Lawrence
Member of Congress

/s/ Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

/s/ Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress

/s/ Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress

/s/ Jahana Hayes
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/s/ Carolyn B. Maloney
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/s/ Yvette D. Clarke
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/s/ Deb Haaland
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/s/ Jimmy Gomez
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/s/ Nydia M. Velázquez
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/s/ James P. McGovern
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/s/ Debbie Dingell
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/s/ Mary Gay Scanlon
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/s/ Peter Welch
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